



Literacy B.C. NEWSLETTER

September 1995

Volume 1, Number 2

1995/96 B.C. Literacy Cost-shared Projects

The National Literacy Secretariat and the B.C. Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour will fund 38 literacy cost-shared projects in B.C. for 1995/96.

The announcement of the \$1.27 million funding was made on September 8 by Premier Mike Harcourt in a ceremony at Vancouver Community College (VCC), and in Ottawa by Joyce Fairbairn, federal minister with special responsibility for literacy.

The 38 projects are shared by 15 B.C.

community colleges and the Open Learning Agency. Project activities include: the development of learning materials, research, community awareness and fund raising, workplace literacy, family literacy, and aboriginal literacy.

One of the purposes of the adult literacy cost-shared fund is to: "encourage active involvement of all sectors of society - governments, voluntary groups, educational institutions, business and labour - in activities which enhance, improve and support literacy education in B.C."

"Returning to school, for people like me who need to learn to read and write better is scary, often difficult and certainly a lot of hard work. Funding from government for these cost-shared projects is appreciated. It will help many, many communities provide badly needed literacy services for students like me."

From a speech by Brenda Lee Giles at the VCC ceremony announcing 1995/96 cost-shared funding. Giles has been a student at VCC since 1992 and is a member of the Executive Committee of the Literacy B.C. Board of Directors.

Some examples of the 1995/96 B.C. literacy cost-shared projects . . .

Support Network: Learners in Transition

The Victoria READ Society will pilot a support network for adult learners who have completed literacy programs. The learners will study problem solving, decision-making, goal setting, and public speaking. The learners will also raise awareness in the community by speaking to business, education, or recreational groups about literacy issues.

Lunchroom Literacy

Northwest Community College, Houston Link to Learning, Northwood Pulp and Timber and the International Woodworkers Association will place a computer with CD ROM in the lunchroom at the local mill in Houston. Volunteers will tutor workers on how to use the computer. The project will encourage workers with low literacy skills to become comfortable using the computer.

"In Their Own Words": Voices from the Community

The Community Language Access Society will work with 12 - 15 intellectually challenged learners to write materials which reflect their voices and experiences. Learners will gain literacy skills through the process of recalling, writing, and telling their stories.

Our Elders' Stories: Completing the Cycle

The Saulteau First Nation and the Muskoti Learning Centre will work with adult education students to listen to, record, and publish elders' stories.

A Book of Readings: Learning Through Critical Thinking

The John Howard Society of B.C. will work with instructors in prisons to compile a book of readings for inmates at the fundamental and intermediate reading levels. The readings will be designed to stimulate critical thinking among inmates and encourage them to participate in discussions and writing tasks.

Copies of "1995/96 Cost-shared Projects: Contacts and Goals," a detailed list of all the projects, are available from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

For information about the cost-shared fund and application procedure, contact:

Audrey Thomas
Coordinator, Adult Literacy Programs
Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour
Second Floor
838 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X4

Phone: 387-6174
Fax: 356-8851
E-mail: amthomas@galaxy.gov.bc.ca

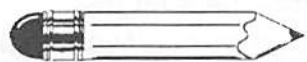
Literacy B.C.'s 1995/96 Cost-Shared Projects . . .

1996 Summer Literacy Institute

Literacy B.C. will hold a two week Summer Institute at the University of British Columbia in July 1996 for literacy practitioners in B.C. The Institute will provide an opportunity for in-depth study of literacy education, discussion and critical reflection on issues in the field, and networking with colleagues. Activities will include university credit courses, workshops, and a showcase of exemplary B.C.-produced curricula, materials and programs. A model for including learners in course development and delivery will also be developed during the Institute.

Resource Manual for Training Literacy Volunteers

Literacy B.C. will develop, design and publish a Resource Training Manual for volunteer tutor program coordinators. The manual will be field-tested in three regions of B.C. before publication. The manual will include: a description of the diversity of approaches in instructing literacy on a one-on-one and small group basis; content and resource material reflecting relevant and appropriate information for the needs of adult learners in tutor programs in B.C.; and suggested resources for workplace/workforce programs.



Writers Wanted for Resource Manual

Literacy B.C. is looking for contributors to the Resource Manual for training volunteer tutors. Topics to be included in the manual are:

- ❖ background information/definitions of literacy
- ❖ examples of mission statements/program philosophy
- ❖ expectations of volunteer tutors
- ❖ additional available resources and support services
- ❖ how adults learn
- ❖ characteristics of adult learners (case studies)

- ❖ ethics of a tutoring relationship
- ❖ evaluating/assessing progress and learning
- ❖ designing instructional material

Eight contract positions are available. Skills required include: excellent written communication skills; ability to work independently; experience training volunteer tutors; knowledge of the literacy field.

Please submit a letter of application, with samples of writing, to Literacy B.C. by October 20, 1995. For more information on the project, contact Mary Thompson-Boyd at Literacy B.C.

More of Literacy B.C.'s 1995/96 Cost-Shared Projects . . .

Regional Literacy Networks Project

The purpose of the Regional Literacy Networks project is to train experienced literacy coordinators in six regions of B.C. The coordinators will act as resource people for literacy and ABE practitioners, volunteer tutor program coordinators, and learners.

The objectives of the project are to:

- ❖ Develop and strengthen regional literacy networks.
- ❖ Coordinate professional development training for literacy and ABE practitioners and volunteer tutor program coordinators.
- ❖ Develop and strengthen learner networks in three regions in B.C.
- ❖ Provide consultation, information and support to literacy and ABE practitioners and volunteer tutor program coordinators.

- ❖ Develop literacy resource material collections in the six regions.

The six regional literacy coordinators are:

- ❖ Greg Meaker, East Kootenay
- ❖ Sue Port, Selkirk
- ❖ Maureen Stephens, Okanagan
- ❖ Nora Bitner, Northern Lights
- ❖ Vancouver Island: To be announced
- ❖ New Caledonia: To be announced

Fund Raising Educational and Support Program for Literacy in B.C.

Five two-day interactive fund raising workshops will be provided in various regions of B.C. Follow-up support and consultation will be available to participants for six months after the workshops. A 60-page manual/workbook about fundraising will be published.

Who We Are

Literacy B.C., founded in March 1990, is a coalition of people and groups concerned with promoting literacy in B.C.

Our mission is to promote literacy, to support literacy learners, to develop community partnerships and to present a united voice on literacy. We are supported by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada; the B.C. Ministry

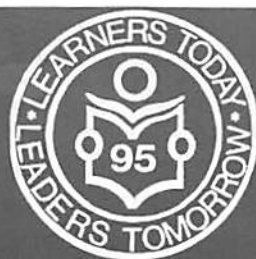
of Skills, Training and Labour; memberships; and donations. Literacy B.C. welcomes your news and comments. Send to:

Literacy B.C.
622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
Phone: 1-800-663-1293
Fax: (604) 684-8520

Donations to Literacy B.C. are tax deductible.



Provincial Learners Conference



From May 17 - 19, 1995, 60 learners from B.C. gathered together at Cultus Lake for the 1995 Provincial Learners Conference. Ten learners from the Movement for Canadian Literacy Board also attended. They came from all across Canada.

Bruce McAdam, from Douglas region, attended the Conference. This is his report.

It all started in May 1995 when my teacher, Jan Benge, asked if I would like to go to a Learners Conference. I suppose I should tell you that I am sixty years old and am attending Douglas College.

I was very scared and I didn't really want to go. Jan had a special way of talking to me to encourage me to go and that I would be okay. I did agree to go and the next thing I know, I'm there at the Conference. It was held at the Columbia Bible Camp at Cultus Lake. There were about 70 of us there and I was able to meet and get to know many of them.

There were many different workshops available and I found them to be well done. Also, there was a lot of sharing going on between the other students. What I learned most from the Conference

is that there are a lot of people who cannot read and write. For that reason alone, the Conference was a big success!

I feel there is a big need for all of us to talk about the fears of going back to school and that it is all right to feel these fears.

During our free time in the evening, most of us went up to the campfire pit and sat around in a circle. We shared with each other our reasons for being back in school and how we were progressing. We also talked about why we hadn't gone through school. The Conference was a great experience for me.

The full report of the Conference will be available at the end of September. If you would like a copy, phone Literacy B.C. at 1-800-663-1293.

Learners on Board

What happens when learners join the boards of adult literacy organizations? *Learner involvement on the boards of adult literacy coalitions* examines this question. Published by the National Literacy Secretariat and written by Betty-Anne Lloyd, the document presents 12 key issues for organizations to consider when involving learners on their boards. Some of these issues are:

- ❖ We need to understand the history of learner involvement in adult literacy organizations. We also need to hear and talk about different people's experience with the history.
- ❖ We need to be clear about our organization's membership, mandate, goals and objectives. We also need to know how our funding affects what we do.
- ❖ We need to look closely at how different people are included in our organization. We need to ask how these people are involved in decision making.
- ❖ We need to be clear about what our organization expects from board members.
- ❖ We need to talk about the different skills that we think board members need.
- ❖ We need to recognize that our board members do not all have the same kind of experience, money, supports or interests. This means they do not all have the same kind of power. We need to respect these differences and find ways to share resources and power. We also need to have policies for conflict resolution.
- ❖ We need to answer a question that is very important to some people. This question is, "Who can represent learners?"
- ❖ We need to decide what kinds of learner involvement make sense for our organization. Then, we have to make the necessary changes.

Copies of the document are available on loan from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Taking Steps for Literacy



This report on the Walks for Literacy that took place on Vancouver Island last spring was written by Ingrid Braathen.

The walk for literacy originated in Parksville B.C. in 1994 and takes place around June 12 each year.

The walk was the dream child of Carol Bossio. Carol wanted her community of Parksville to be aware that there is help for those needing literacy skills. It was also a way for her to thank the Write Place for the help they gave her.

Carol's dream is to see the Walk spread across Canada. This is where I come in. I was asked in the spring of 1995 if I would be willing to join Carol and do a walk for Courtenay/Comox, B.C. With the backing of the Adult

Learning Centre (CALLS) and a steering committee the walk came into being in Courtenay. We had a lot of fun! It was also neat to know that at the same time that we were walking, Carol and her gang were walking in Parksville!

Carol and I will be putting together a Walk for Literacy package for those wanting information on how to do a walk in their community. We hope you will join us in June 1996. Come walk with us!

For more information, contact:

Ingrid Braathen at 339-2762

Carol Bossio at 248-3874

Ingrid Braathen was recently elected to the Board of Literacy B.C. She is also a Board member of the Adult Learning Centre in Courtenay where she began her upgrading in 1993.

Carol Bossio was elected to the Board of Literacy B.C. in 1994. She is also on the Board of the Write Place in Parksville where she learned to read with the help of her tutor.

Resources

Literacy and New Technologies

This is the report of an event which focused on the use of technology in literacy instruction, and the possible applications of new information and communication technologies to the literacy field in B.C. The event, hosted by the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, was held in June 1995 and was attended by 30 people involved in literacy in B.C.

The report summarizes the topics of interest discussed at the meeting, including: philosophical issues; the possibilities for building community; instructional applications; and

professional development. The report also includes a description of services and projects in B.C. that advance the use of technology in literacy. For example, an Internet listserve has been set up by Martin Buck of Camosun College to provide an open discussion of information and ideas about adult basic education. To participate in the listserve: **send email to mailserv@camosun.bc.ca; leave the subject blank; in the body of the message type "Subscribe ABE-L."**

A copy of the report is available from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Policy Conversations on New Technologies and Literacy, and Workplace/ Workforce Literacy

These reports document two policy conversations that took place in Ottawa in January 1995. The conversations were hosted by the National Literacy Secretariat and attended by representatives of literacy organizations from across Canada. The reports cover the role new technologies can play in promoting and developing literacy in Canada, and key issues in workplace/ workforce literacy.

A copy of both reports is available on loan from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Copies are available from
Literacy B.C. of:

**Our Own Words,
Summer 1995**

and

**Adult Basic Education in
British Columbia Colleges,
1995-1996:**

An Articulation Handbook



Phone:

1-800-663-1293

Resources

Let's Go Shopping

This small handbook is a guide for low literacy adults while shopping. The handbook is humorously illustrated with cartoons and contains: descriptions of metric terms; examples of how to calculate the unit price of an item; a guide to overhead aisle signs; and a variety of helpful hints and shopping tips.

The handbook was developed through a project at the College of the Rockies. Copies of the handbook are available for \$1.00 from the college bookstore in Cranbrook. Contact:

College of the Rockies Bookstore
P.O. Box 8500
Cranbrook, B.C.
V1C 5L7

Phone: 489-8265
Fax: 489-1790



Footprints: Oral History at the O'Keefe Ranch

This is a collection of articles by literacy students at Okanagan University College in Vernon. The articles are based on museum artifacts the students used to collect oral history from older members of the community. Some of the artifacts included: the saddle, in an article about what it was like to be a cowboy; and the chuckwagon and the stagecoach in an article about the days when transportation was by horse-drawn vehicles.

Copies of the book are available from Literacy B.C. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.



Saddle: Sketch by student Carl Hoath

Canada - United Kingdom Literacy Exchange

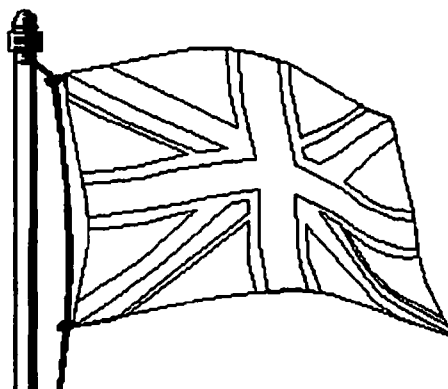
In March, the British Council sponsored the Canadian portion of a literacy study exchange between the National Literacy Secretariat and the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU). The reciprocal visit to Canada by ALBSU delegates is scheduled for late September. The exchange, between Canada and England/Wales, allowed for a sharing of information about literacy programs, activities and research. Ongoing linkages will enable the agencies and the literacy field to benefit from each others' knowledge and experience.

The Canadian delegation included: Linda Mitchell (Literacy B.C.); Bram Fisher (Family Literacy Interest Group); Maurice Taylor (Partnerships in Learning); Linda Shohet (Centre for Literacy); and Yvette Souque (NLS). ALBSU invited British experts and practitioners from model programs to meet the Canadians in a seminar format focusing on the five areas of interest identified by the NLS. These included research, family literacy, literacy activities by non-literacy/non-educational organizations, technology and workplace literacy. Site visits to a number of cities in England were organized to enable

the Canadians to visit literacy projects and activities implemented by health and housing authorities, colleges and businesses.

The exchange identified research, family literacy and the work of non-literacy/non-educational organizations as particularly interesting to the literacy field in Canada. The visit highlighted the differences in social structures and approaches in "how we (in the literacy field) do business in Canada." But a number of possible linkages between institutions and/or programs were identified. The NLS and delegation members will follow up on the contacts made in England. A report is being prepared and will be made available soon.

For more information, call
Linda Mitchell at 1-800-663-1293.



Plain language on the rise in South Africa



An expert from B.C. is helping the government of South Africa to communicate to the South African people in plain language.

Phil Knight is a lawyer who specializes in plain legal language and a member of the Board of Literacy B.C. He is part of an international team that is assisting in the development of a plain language policy in South Africa. On several recent trips he has met with South African officials to discuss how plain language can benefit a country where, says Knight, "the majority of the people are undereducated and underliterate and are asked to deal with important matters in their lives in a language that isn't their first language."

Eleven languages are recognized in the South African constitution, says Knight. Many more languages are also spoken by the people of South Africa and some of these are oral

languages only. Since English is the language of business and government, much of the population has to read and write in a second language. Furthermore, one of legacies of apartheid is that, in South Africa, "literacy rates follow race. As much as 50% of the African (black) population may not read or write in any language."

Part of Knight's work in South Africa has involved creating and testing a demonstration of a law rewritten in plain language. In measuring the differences between how well people could read the original and the plain language versions of the law, Knight found that "the plain language law was easier for everyone to read but, more importantly, the greatest improvement was experienced by those with the most disadvantages. The plain language way of writing brings the people with the lowest levels of literacy closer to equality of access."

The government of South Africa is currently considering how the use of plain language may be appropriate for the writing of a new South African constitution.

Announcements

Reading program on the hook for false advertising

The controversial claims and endorsements that characterized advertising for the reading program, **Hooked on Phonics**, have been banned. The ban is the result of an agreement between the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Gateway Educational Products, the company which produces and markets Hooked on Phonics. The agreement was signed after the FTC alleged that television, radio and print advertising for Hooked on Phonics was "false and misleading."

The agreement bans Gateway from representing Hooked on Phonics as a program that "can or will quickly and easily teach persons with reading problems or disabilities to read, regardless of the nature of the problem or disability." Gateway is also banned from claiming that Hooked on Phonics:

- ❖ is effective for teaching persons with learning disabilities, including dyslexia and attention deficit disorders, to read;

- ❖ can or will cause users with reading problems or disabilities to achieve significant improvements in reading levels or classroom grades;
- ❖ is effective for teaching persons in a home setting to read, without the need for additional assistance such as a teacher or tutor;
- ❖ has helped nearly one million or any other number of students to learn to read;
- ❖ provides any other educational benefit, or that any endorsement of the product represents the typical experience of people who use the program, unless such claims are substantiated by competent and reliable scientific evidence.

Part of the enforcement of the agreement requires Gateway to provide the FTC with all reports, tests, studies, surveys, or demonstrations that contradict or call into question the claims made for Hooked on Phonics, including complaints from consumers.

Sharing the Vision

Learners in 14 B.C. communities were provided with free eye exams the first week of September 1995. The exams were part of "Sharing the Vision," a national effort by the Canadian Association of Optometrists and its provincial affiliates to help adult literacy students by treating potential vision problems at no cost.

Dr. Joan Hansen of the B.C. Association of Optometrists says, "We've been working with the literacy movement for several years to publicize the connection between good vision and literacy. However, this is the first time there's been a nation-wide program of donated eye exams and glasses."



Announcements

New Learning Centre Opens at Library Square

A free, drop-in adult learning centre has opened in the new central branch of the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) at Library Square. The centre is operated by Vancouver Community College (VCC) in partnership with VPL.

The centre is located on level 3 of the library and is open on:

Mondays 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Tuesdays 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Students can drop in to the centre or contact the instructor, Sally Gellard, by leaving a message at the VCC Basic Education Office. Phone: 871-7369.

Upcoming Conference

The International Reading Association, Lower Mainland Council and B.C. Literacy Council, will hold their 1995 annual fall conference, October 19-21, 1995 at Robson Square Conference Centre. The conference is entitled, "Literacy for Life: Informed Practice." For registration information, contact:

Honey Halpern

Phone: 228-1350

Fax: 464-2420

Carrie Froese

Phone: 937-7222

Fax: 464-2420

New Coordinator for Laubach

Laubach Literacy has hired a field services coordinator for the B.C. interior. Jan

Seedhouse can be reached at:

215 - 421 St. Paul Street
Kamloops, B.C. V2C 2J7

Phone: 374-5240

Fax: 828-0636

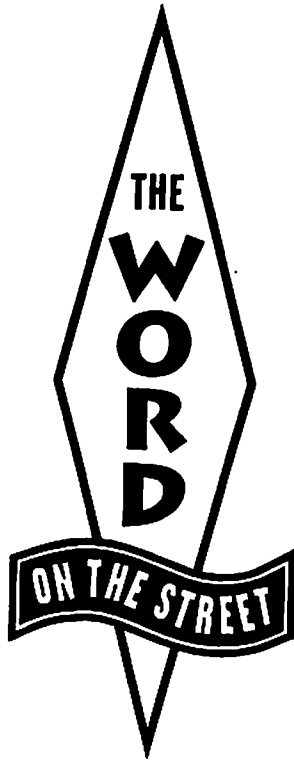
Are you looking for lapel pins

featuring the literacy logo?



Literacy B.C. has received enquiries about where to find literacy lapel pins. We're considering making a bulk purchase and then reselling the pins to the B.C. literacy field. Before we make the order, we'd like to know how many groups may want to purchase the pins. We'd appreciate a call to our office to let us know that you're interested, and how many pins you might need. Call 1-800-663-1293 or fax us at 684-8520.

Upcoming Events



On Sunday, September 24, 62 exhibitors will line one city block in Vancouver for a festival of readings, bookselling, literacy information, and family fun activities.

The Word on the Street is a national, annual celebration of reading and writing to highlight the importance of literacy in the lives of Canadians. This year, for the first time, Vancouver and Halifax will join Toronto in celebrating The Word on the Street book and magazine fair.

Events will include the Authors Reading Tent, the Celebrity Reading Tent, the Family Activity Tent, the Mainstage, and The Word on the Net, linking festival-goers in Vancouver with those in Toronto and Halifax. Local authors, actors, singer/songwriters, poets and playwrights will be featured, along with thousands of books and magazines from British Columbia, Canada and around the world.

The Word on the Street takes place from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Homer Street between Georgia and Robson, in front of Library Square. Admission is free.

Connections '96

Linking teaching, learning and technology is the theme of a conference to be held in Vancouver, May 10-11, 1996.

Connections '96 will provide B.C. educators with an opportunity to explore how educational technology can be successfully linked with the teaching and learning process. The conference will be of interest to both novices and experts who are interested in the effective use of educational technology.

The conference will be hosted by the Standing Committee on Educational Technology (SCOET) and is supported by the B.C. Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour.

Proposals are requested on conference themes such as: new models for teaching and learning; video conferencing; Internet, World Wide Web; multimedia; use of computers in education; distance education; and instructional support.

Proposals should be submitted to the SCOET office no later than November 1, 1995. Contact:

Amanda Harby
Conference Coordinator
Connections '96
Standing Committee on Educational
Technology
5th Floor, 1483 Douglas Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 3K4
Phone: 356-7662
Fax: 387-9142
E-mail: harby@camosun.bc.ca

Literacy B.C. Annual General Meeting

Please join us Friday, October 27, 1995

4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Holiday Inn

1110 Howe Street

Vancouver, B.C.

"LITERACY IN THE 90s"

Keynote Speakers

Yvette Souque

Program Consultant

Human Resources Development Canada

Audrey Thomas

Provincial Literacy Coordinator

Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour

-
- ❖ Learn more about national trends and initiatives in literacy
 - ❖ Meet the new Literacy B.C. Board of Directors for 1995-96
 - ❖ A wine and cheese reception will follow. Renew acquaintances, make new contacts and celebrate another successful year for literacy in B.C.
 - ❖ Displays and new resources

To register, call (604) 684-0624

Fax: (604) 684-8520

Before October 17, 1995

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Changes to the Constitution and ByLaws of LBCS Literacy B.C. Society

These motions, to amend the ByLaws of LBCS Literacy B.C. Society, will be presented at the Annual General Meeting, October 27, 1995.

MOTION A:

This motion is intended to reduce the size of the Literacy B.C. Board of Directors from 24 to 15 members. Recently, the National Literacy Secretariat cut funding to all provincial literacy groups by 10%. In addition, there is general uncertainty about future government funding. A smaller board will reduce expenses and provide a more efficient and effective working group.

The motion is:

That the members approve the following changes to the ByLaws of the LBCS Literacy B.C. Society:

That **ARTICLE IV - DIRECTORS and OFFICERS** be repealed and replaced with:

The Board

- (1) The Board of the Society consists of -
 - (a) not more than 15 directors, each elected to represent one of the 15 college regions in British Columbia; and
 - (b) the Past President, whenever a person holds that office.
- (2) At least four of the elected directors must be learners.
- (3) Any director who is not a member when elected must apply for membership within 30 days.
- (4) The Board must decide the administrative procedure for conducting elections.

MOTION B:

That a plain language version of the ByLaws of LBCS Literacy B.C. Society, which is a consolidated replacement for all previous versions of the ByLaws, be adopted by the members.

Copies of the plain language consolidated version of the LBCS Literacy B.C. Society ByLaws are available from Literacy B.C.:

Phone: 1-800-663-1293

Fax: (604) 684-8520